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Castle Rock

STATE PARK

CONSERVATION

THE PARK

Castle Rock State Park is located three miles south of Oregon, Illinois on Highway 2. The park is centrally located in the Rock River Hills region of Illinois, and its rolling topography is drained by the Rock River. The park is located along the west bank of the Rock River in Ogle County. The park is very representative of the Rock River Hills area with spectacular rock formations, deep ravines, and unique northern plant associations. A sandstone butte, adjacent to the river, has given the park its name.

HISTORY

Illinois Indian tribes inhabited the region until 1730 when the Sauk and the Fox tribes, who were being forced westward by the colonists, invaded and inhabited the region. The Indians called the river in the new territory "Sinnissippi," meaning "rocky waters."

In the early 1800's the Indians were again forced westward into Iowa. In 1831, Blackhawk, the Sauk chief, lead his people in a series of raids back into Illinois to reclaim their ancestral lands. The battles that followed were known as the Blackhawk Indian wars. Chief Blackhawk was captured in 1832 and ordered to a reservation.

The Castle Rock area was settled by New Englanders early in the 19th century. This area was proposed as a state park in 1921 by the "Friends of Our Native Landscape," and they were able to acquire some of the land they described as "a unique wilderness remnant of great natural beauty and scientific interest." In 1964, the Natural Lands Institute, a non-profit natural lands preservation group, conducted a public fund-raising campaign to preserve part of the Castle Rock area.

Castle Rock was recognized by the Department of Conservation as an outstanding area of major scientific importance in 1965. It was established as a project area, and land acquisition by the DOC was started in 1970. A master management plan for the development of Castle Rock was initiated by the Department of Conservation and signed in 1980.

At the present time, Castle Rock consists of approximately 2,000 acres, 710 of which are designated as an Illinois Nature Preserve. The site was dedicated as a state park on August 29, 1978.

NATURAL AREAS

The basis for the acquisition of Castle Rock State Park is the protection of natural resources that are unique to Illinois. A thin layer of glacial till covers this region and several distinctive plant species, remnants of the native forest and prairie, still exist. In one valley, 27 different types of ferns have been identified. The park is one of the largest significant natural areas in the northern part of Illinois.

Most of the outstanding natural features are located in the dedicated Nature Preserve which is protected by state law. Use of the 710-acre preserve will be restricted to scientific study and limited interpretation activities.

LIMITATIONS

The planned development of Castle Rock centers around the Nature Preserve. All development is limited by soil types. Soil types consist of silt loams and fine, sandy loams which are connected with the general high degree of slopes which limit use and development at Castle Rock. These soils are subject to severe erosion under heavy use.

Castle Rock is a large sandstone butte situated between the Rock River and Highway 2. The rock is made up of St. Peter sandstone. There are only a few places in the state where St. Peter sandstone comes to the surface, even though it underlies practically the entire state of Illinois.

FACILITIES

Picnicking — There are three picnic areas available for use with shelters, picnic tables, playground equipment, grills, toilets, and drinking water. There are also scattered tables for use along the river. Two of the picnic areas offer a beautiful view over the Rock River Valley. The Old Orchard Picnic Area does provide facilities for the handicapped such as tables, grills, and toilets.

Trails - There are six miles of marked hiking trails developed at this time. These trails offer the opportunity to view woodland animals and birds that inhabit the park. The trails' scenic views also offer many chances for the photographers to sharpen their skills. More trails are planned with the parks development. Cross-country skiing and tobogganing are also available when weather permits.

Fishing — All the fishing is done in the Rock River. The park offers one and one-half miles of bank fishing. There is also a boat ramp available for public use. Boat size is limited due to the varying depth of the river. The most commonly caught fish is the catfish, but some bass, northern walleye, and crappie may be taken. The park also has a canoe camp area available along the river.

Hunting — Limited squirrel and deer hunting is available at the park. For more information, please contact the park office.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Projected development at Castle Rock includes more picnic areas and a campground. The development of the campground will be limited to keep the area in its natural setting and will also include primitive tent campsites.

More trails will be developed which will link various areas of the park, and signs will guide pedestrians through the park.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

It is your responsibility to be aware of the rules and regulations at this site. Admittance will not be granted to groups of 25 or more persons to any state site unless permission from the area staff has been secured to use the facilities. It is also required that groups of minors have adequate supervision and at least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

All state sites are open year-round, except on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of park roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to park facilities is by foot only.

For more details on this site, contact Site Superintendent, Castle Rock State Park, R.R. 2, Oregon, IL 61061, phone (815) 732-7329. For more information on other sites, write the Department of Conservation, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, IL 62706.

PLEASE — This area is for all to enjoy, so please help keep it clean. All vehicles must remain on existing roadways and parking lots. No plants, flowers, shrubs, or trees may be removed or damaged. Fires are permitted only in camp stoves located in the picnic areas. All pets must be on a leash which is a maximum of 10 feet.

PLEASE CONSIDER THE RESULTS IF OTHERS TREAT THE PARK AS YOU DO.

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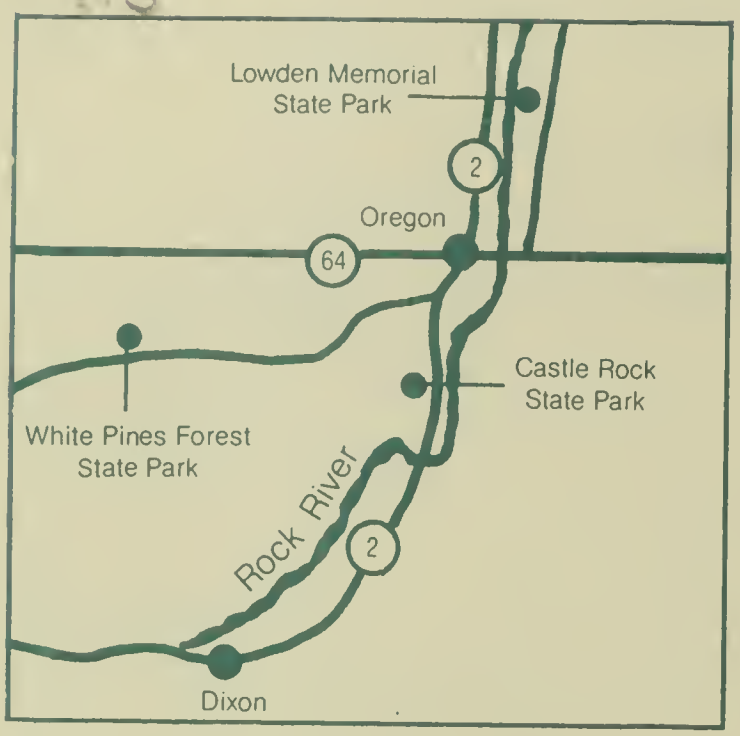

NORTH TRAILS
1 — River Bluff — 1/4 Mile
2 — Wildlife Viewing — 1 Mile
3 — Heather Valley — 2 Miles
4 — Timber Edge — 1/4 Mile

Nature Preserve
Easement Property
Valley View Picnic Area
Aspen Ridge Picnic Area
Service Complex & Park Office
Nature Preserve
Old Orchard Picnic Area
Ridge Road
River
Boat Ramp
Entrance
Wayside Area
Castle Rock Scenic Overlook
Private Property
Wilderness Road
Nature Preserve
Rock
Rt. 2
Park Boundary
Nature Preserve Boundary
Canoe Camp Area

SOUTH TRAILS
1 — Oak Ridge Trail — 1 Mile
2 — Lookout Trail — 1 Mile
3 — Fox Trail — 1/2 Mile
(South Trails are closed from Sept. 15 - Dec. 31)

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